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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO SCA/A, S/CRS, EUR/RPM  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
NSC FOR WOOD  
OSD FOR SHIVERS  
CENTCOM FOR CG CSTC-A, CG CJTF-82 POLAD

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PRT LASHKAR GAH, HELMAND PROVINCE: MUSA QALA CONDUCTS  
OFFICIAL SCHOOL OPENING

¶1. (SBU) District Governor Mullah Salam officially opened the Musa Qala Central School on February 28. Several hundred students and dozens of citizens watched Salam open the school and deliver an excellent speech that focused on the importance of education. Salam urged the students to take care of their school and asked the citizens to respect and protect their teachers. He thanked the international community for its support but said more must be done in Musa Qala, and the people of Kajaki should now enjoy the same benefits. Salam welcomed the provincial government representatives and praised the work of the Musa Qala Shura in preparation for the event and the opening of the school.

¶2. (SBU) Representatives from the Ministries of Education and Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Helmand provincial council echoed Salam's words and promised continuing support for the people of Musa Qala. Residents told PRTOff they appreciated the new school and were pleased it was repaired so quickly. They said their children liked the equipment provided by USAID's Local Governance and Community Development Program and looked forward to more books and study material. Other residents said they now hoped more schools could be opened in neighboring villages because some of the children were traveling a long way to attend classes in the city. Several teachers said the school was very popular, and they expected the enrollment to soon exceed 600 students.

¶3. (SBU) Salam told PRTOff that he insisted on a formal opening to show local residents that things are progressing. He clearly understands the need for these types of public events and prefers this style to maintain his support. The PRT welcomed the school's formal opening to maintain reconstruction momentum and is working to start construction on the Central Mosque and other projects in Musa Qala.

WOOD